

# College Bound

ISSUES & TRENDS FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

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## Admissions Watch

# Early Word On the Class of 2017

SEVERAL TRENDS are already emerging for this year's admissions cycle. More colleges are increasing the number of international students admitted to their freshman classes. Some colleges and universities are beginning to feel the impact of the demographic shifts in certain sections of the country as they try to recruit students. Still other colleges acquire even more applications with stronger applicants to become even more competitive. And some of the smaller private and public colleges are offering financial options to students trying to relieve the stress of financing a college education.

Here is a look inside some colleges as the school year opens.

**Boston U.'s Class of 2017 is "Most Selective."** And that doesn't appear to be an overstatement.... Students had a particularly hard time being admitted to BU last spring. To begin with, the applicant pool was 52,704, a 20 percent increase over the previous year. Some 37 percent were admitted, nine percent less than the previous year. Among BU's Class of 2017, according to *BU Today*, is an iPhone app creator, an intern for Boeing Aerospace, an athlete who climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and a student speaking six languages. The average high school grade-point average increased from 3.09 20 years ago to 3.6. The average SAT score is 1929, a seven-point increase over last year's freshman class.

**A Bowdoin Earthquake.** For the first time in school history, a plurality of the 497 incoming first-year students at Bowdoin C. does not come from Maine and Massachusetts. The

geographic shift has attracted the largest group from New York State, 73 students. In fact, 65 percent of the new first-year class is from outside New England, and 7 percent are international students. Overall, 7,052 students applied to Bowdoin, but only 14.9 percent were admitted. Early Decision applicants make up nearly 53 percent of the new class. And 51 percent come from public high schools. About 46 percent of the class receives financial aid, with the average amount of \$36,600, which includes no loans.

**Coe C.'s Historic Enrollment.** Coe C. in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, enrolled its largest group of full-time students in school history, 1,338, a 2.6 percent increase over last fall. Coe's freshman class posted an average 3.63 GPA and a 25.7 mean composite ACT score. Tuition hit \$43,590, a 3.98 percent increase over last year. But financial aid increased by a little more. Julie Staker, dean of admissions, attributes the increase to more students visiting and staying overnight. "They realize that we are at their disposal if they choose to come here for four years," she told *thegazette.com*.

**Columbia U.'s Class Includes First-Generation Students.** Fifteen percent of first-year students heading to Columbia C. and Columbia Engineering are the first generation in their family to attend college. Seventeen percent of the 1,416 first-year students are receiving Pell Grants and 51 percent are female. The middle 50 percent of students scored between 2150 and 2320 on the SAT and 90 percent were in the top 10 percent of

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## Financial Affairs News

**Pell Grant Program Growth.** Some 9.4 million students received \$33.6 billion in Pell grants during the 2011-2012 school year. The maximum Pell grant in 2013-2014 is \$5,645. From 2006-2007, inflation-adjusted spending on Pell grants increased 158 percent. The increase resulted from an 80 percent increase in the number of recipients, and a 43 percent increase in the amount of the average grant during those four years. But in 2011-2012, spending for the program declined because of a reduction in the amount of the average grant.

Why the huge increase? The recession of 2007-2009, and the slow economic recovery, attracted more students into the pool. Also, the expansion of online education, particularly at for-profit institutions, accounted for many more students. At the same time, the maximum grant rose from \$4,050-\$5,550 over the same period.

**JP Morgan Chase Ends Student Loans.** Giant JP Morgan Chase has left the shrinking private student loan market. Since 2010, when the government overhauled its student loan program, JP Morgan's share of student loans has fallen from \$6.9 billion to \$200 million. Last year, JP Morgan stopped giving student loans to non-customers. "We no longer see any meaningful growth in the private student lending market," Trish Wexler, a JP Morgan representative, told *The Washington Post*.

"This is a troubling trend for students and taxpayers, meaning even less competition in the marketplace," said Richard Hunt,

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## EARLY WORD

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their graduating class.

**Crowder Draws More Students with a Tuition Break.** Crowder C. in Southwest Missouri enrolled 5,800 students this fall. Crowder is an inexpensive option for many who live in its nine county service area. Classes are “literally an average of 10 miles away,” Jim Riggs, Crowder’s admissions director, told fourstateshomepage.com. The school expects to see continuing increases in interest, since it virtually eliminated out-of-state tuition for all 50 states, as of this fall.

**More Illini Show Up.** About 400 more freshmen than last year arrived at the U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign this fall. Some 33,201 students had applied, and 20,738 or about 62 percent, were admitted. A total of 7,331 first-year students enrolled. The U. of I.’s yield rose slightly to 35.3 percent. The freshman average ACT score was 28.6, while the average SAT score rose from 1337 to 1344. About 55 percent of the new freshmen ranked in the top 10 percent of their high school class. Underrepresented minorities make up 16 percent of the class. And nearly 22 percent are the first in their family to attend college. The top areas of interest of new students: science, technology, engineering and math.

**Geneseo Shines.** SUNY (State U. of N.Y.) Geneseo has steadily raised its academic profile. This fall, 1,100 new freshmen members of the Class of 2017, selected from 9,000 applicants, came to campus with a SAT composite math and reading score of 1300. Total enrollment this fall is about 5,536 students, including 160 doing graduate work. The new class includes 51 international students from 19 countries. A total of 170 international students live with their classmates on a beautiful hillside campus overlooking the historic Genesee Valley.

## FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

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chief executive of the Consumer Bankers Association.

**Enrollment Decline Creates Negative Credit.** Moody’s Investor’s Services said enrollment declines for many U.S. colleges and universities are “credit negative” because they “heighten competitive pressure for all universities. This limits opportunity to grow tuition revenue, now the primary revenue for the majority of public and private universities.”

Moody’s added, “With the fall 2012 enrollment declines most pronounced for students over the age of 25, the credit effect is most acute for community colleges and for the 30 percent of universities we rate where more than

**Haverford C. Says its Class is “Remarkably Diverse.”** Ten percent of the freshman class at Haverford this fall is foreign, compared to nine percent last year, according to *The Clerk*. Dean of Admission Jess Lord, told the paper the class is “a remarkably diverse class in all the ways we measure this.” Students came from 12 countries, with China the top source, followed by South Korea, India, France and Turkey.

Thirty-four states were represented, with 46 percent from the mid-Atlantic region, followed by New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California and Massachusetts. Haverford had 3,585 applicants, 842, or nearly 24 percent, were admitted and 333 students enrolled. Of those from schools reporting rankings, nearly 95 percent were in the top 10 percent of their class.

**Louisiana Lafayette Leaps.** Last spring was the second year of tougher admission standards at the U. of Louisiana at Lafayette. But first-time freshmen and transfer enrollment grew by 3 percent. Some 2,565 new students were part of the 16,647 total students on campus, including 1,198 out-of-state students. The number of international students also increased by 25 percent compared to last year, to 156.

“On increasing our academic standards last year, we anticipated a possible decline in the number of eligible students,” DeWayne Bowie, vice president for enrollment management, told klfy.com. But that didn’t happen. University president Dr. Joseph Savoie said that enrolling better-prepared students improves student retention and graduation rates. UL Lafayette’s graduation rate recently rose from 41 to 44 percent.

The fall 2013 freshman class includes 102 high school valedictorians, the average high school GPA is 3.3 and the average ACT score is 23.1. This summer, *Washington Monthly* magazine ranked UL Lafayette as the fourth best university in the nation at helping lower-income students earn degrees.

25 percent of total enrollment is at the graduate level.” That’s because “declining graduate enrollment can disproportionately affect a university since students in graduate programs typically generate more revenue per student than in undergraduate programs.”

**Canadian Tuition Up for International Undergraduates.** Undergraduate students in Canada paid 3.3 percent more in tuition fees in 2013–14, or \$5,772, compared to \$5,586 the previous year. The highest tuition was paid by undergraduate students in dentistry, \$17,324. Additionally, all students pay a national fee that increased by 5.3 percent to an average of \$817. The average tuition for international undergraduate students coming to Canada rose by nearly 7 percent to \$19,514. ■

**New Big Ten Membership Gives Nebraska Clout.** The 12 percent increase in freshman this year at the U. of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the 32 percent increase in non-resident enrollment, is being credited to its relatively new membership in the Big Ten. Freshman enrollment at the U. of Nebraska-Lincoln reached 4,420 this fall, while total enrollment reached 24,445.

“We’re going to be a school of 30,000, no question about it,” Alan Cerveny, dean of enrollment management, told the *Daily Nebraskan*. Amber Williams, director of the Office of Admissions at UNL, said the school is recruiting in-state, out-of-state and internationally. “We are one of the most affordable schools in the Big Ten and across the country.”

**Freshman Enrollment Up at Northwestern State.** Nearly 9,000 students enrolled at Northwestern State in Louisiana this fall, but that was 500 less than last year. The decline in total enrollment was the result of changes in student financial aid, budget reductions that led to a loss of university-funded scholarships and recent increases in tuition, college officials speculated. However, the entering freshman class of 1,234 students was one of the largest of the last five years. And test scores were the second highest since the school implemented selective admissions in 2005.

**Princeton’s International Reach.** This year, Princeton admissions officers will travel to 31 nations to recruit students. Indeed, its pool of international applicants has soared by almost 94 percent over the past eight years. And this fall, nearly 13 percent, or 161 of the 1,291 freshmen enrolling, are international students. Princeton is one of six U.S. colleges that provides need-blind admission and full-need financial aid to international students.

“We’re a world-class university,” said dean of admissions, Janet Rapelye, “and we want to make sure we’re educating the very best students around the world, which is why we traveled widely and touch base with as many students as we can in a given year.”

**UCLA’s 100,000.** Yes, the U. of California Los Angeles attracted nearly 100,000 applicants this year. “From that daunting number of applicants, we had to make really difficult decisions in order to produce...a truly stellar incoming class of top achievers consisting of 5,701 first-year students and 2,900 transfer students,” Chancellor Gene Block told a ceremony welcoming new students.

The incoming Bruins represent 54 countries, 44 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. About 75 percent hail from California. Some 28 percent of this year’s freshmen and transfer students come from underrepresented minorities. ■

## A Focus on Process

**LinkedIn College.** LinkedIn, the social media tool used by many professionals in the work place to tout their skills and make new contacts, has lowered its user age to 14 years old, and also launched University Pages, “in an effort to help students network around schools.” LinkedIn says “students can visit a University Page to see whether the alumni work in their field and at which companies the graduates have a bigger presence.” And “students can ask questions to faculty, staff, alumni and students to get insight into a school’s culture and strengths.” See, <http://blog.linkedin.com/2013/08/19/introducing-linkedin-university-pages/>.

### NEWS AT NACAC

**Rankings Reaction.** *U.S. News* recently revised the way it computes its college rankings. But NACAC, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, is not entirely impressed. “While we appreciate the revisions to the rankings formula, we still believe *U.S. News* emphasizes the wrong information in attempting to evaluate colleges,” said Joyce Smith, NACAC CEO.

NACAC approves of how *U.S. News* deemphasized class rank in favor of outcomes, such as student performance and graduation. However, it criticizes how it increased the importance of student SAT and ACT scores in its new formula. NACAC said the magazine should eliminate standardized test scores from its ranking methodology, and it advises colleges to deemphasize test scores if the scores do not add to the college’s understanding of student success.

Instead of relying on these kind of rankings, NACAC recommends that parents and students use the U.S. Department of Education’s “College Navigator” webpage for comprehensive information about colleges. The most important thing for students to keep in mind, NACAC says, is “Which college is best for them?”

**International Agents OK, But.** After much discussion, NACAC voted to permit the use of commissioned agents in recruiting international students for U.S. colleges and universities. Still, not everyone is on board. North Carolina State U., for example, stated on its website, that despite the ruling, it would not use agents in its admissions process, but admissions employees who work directly with the university. Those who choose to allow agents must follow certain guidelines, according to NACAC. For both rulings, see, [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org).

### GETTING STUDENTS TO “GO.”

**On Point Syracuse.** On Point for College, a Syracuse non-profit that works with low-income students to get them in to and stay in college,

just received a \$450,000 grant to work with an additional 1,500 students over the next three years. On Point currently serves 5,000 young adults, ages 17 to 29. On Point’s 160 volunteers counsel and drive students to college and visit them once they’re admitted to help make sure they’re progressing. See, <http://www.sayyessyracuse.org>.

**Every Student Needs a “Posse.”** That is the opinion of the non-profit Posse Foundation which to date has identified, recruited and trained 4,484 high schools students to attend college in “posses” or teams. Posses receive full scholarships from partnering colleges and universities. This summer, St. Olaf, Syracuse and Wesleyan joined 42 other colleges and universities in offering the program. Deborah Bial, founder and president, was awarded a McGraw Prize in Education this fall. For more info, see [www.possefoundation.org](http://www.possefoundation.org).

**Counselor Texts.** West Virginia’s Higher Education Policy Commission will promote “texting” with the help of \$225,000 from the Kresge Foundation, which has launched a program where students at 14 high schools receive college planning texts and texts from their high school counselors. See, <http://www.cfwwconnect.com/text-messaging-intervention>.

### NEW AID SOURCES

**A Free College Degree.** Cornell U., Dartmouth C., Princeton and Hamilton C. are joining the “Say Yes to Education” program, which offers the hope of free tuition to 65,000 students in kindergarten through high school in the Buffalo and Syracuse, New York, school districts, as well as at individual schools in Harlem, Hartford, Connecticut and Philadelphia. The students must be able to meet the college’s individual admissions requirements and their family must have a taxable income of \$75,000 or less.

“The kids still have to work hard and get in, but the financial barrier is eliminated because of the generosity of these higher education institutions,” Mary Anne Schmitt-Carey, president of the Say Yes to Education Foundation, told a Washington press conference. A total of 54 private colleges participate in the program.

**The 2014 Most Valuable Student Scholarship.** To ameliorate the rising costs of college tuition, the Elks Foundation announced it will award 20 top scholarships ranging from \$20,000 to \$50,000 with 480 students receiving \$4,000 scholarships totaling \$3.74 million. The MVS Scholarship is open to high schools seniors in the U.S. and the awards are based on scholarship, leadership and financial need. For applications, see, [www.elks.org/enf/scholars](http://www.elks.org/enf/scholars). ■

## THE COUNSELOR’S BOOKSHELF

WITH DISCUSSION about the merit of rankings aside, here are links to several new guides to colleges hot off the press.

**2014 Best Colleges.** The new *U.S. News* guide does include data on tuition, acceptance rates, class size and average debt for 1,680 colleges and universities. But this year the guide increased the weight of graduation and retention rates in its measures. Princeton was the top National U.; Williams C. top Liberal Arts; ISBN-10: 1931469628; \$9.95; <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com>.

[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com).

**The Best 378 Colleges 2014.** After surveying 126,000 students at 378 colleges, Princeton Review released its latest guide book of best colleges. For example, Best Library: Columbia U.; Best Dorms: Smith C.; Most Beautiful Campus: U. of Mississippi. ISBN-10: 0307946053; \$23.99; [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com).

**Beloit C. Mindset List.** What started as a simple curiosity project in 1998 by two Beloit C. professors has now taken a life of its own.

The Beloit C. Mindset Lists looks at the world through the eyes of first-year students. This fall, over 100,000 people wanted to know the results the minute they were published. So, to see the current list, visit [www.beloit.edu/mindset](http://www.beloit.edu/mindset).

**People are Talking About....** *Early Decision: Based on a True Frenzy* by Lacy Crawford; a novel drawn on 15 years as a private college counselor; published by William Morrow; ISBN: 0062240617; \$25.95; [www.harpercollins.com](http://www.harpercollins.com). ... *And Why Public Higher Education Should be Free* by Robert Samuels; ISBN: 978-0-8135-6123-3 paper; \$22.95; <http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu>. ■

## CURRICULUM AFFAIRS

**Brandeis U.'s Business.** The Brandeis International Business School has launched a new program to enable students in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences to complete an MBA in three semesters after graduation, according to thejustice.org. The new dual-degree program is designed for students in the sciences as well the liberal arts. Undergraduates are required to take two classes in business or economics. But then they may begin the program right after completing their undergraduate degree.

**Drexel's New College of Computing.** Drexel U. in Philadelphia has launched a new College of Computing and Informatics which will begin enrolling students next fall. The college "will be an important locus for innovation – from big data to software development to cyber-security and much more..." said John A. Fry, Drexel's president. The college will enroll more than 2,200 students during its first year, and plans to increase enrollment by 18 percent annually to help bridge the gap between graduates and the number of jobs in the field.

**SUNY's First Architecture Degree.** This fall, Alfred State is kicking off study for its new, five-year BAarch program. It will give students "active immersion in the liberal arts/humanities" with additional focus on: "vigorous training in design and the poetics of construction; solid knowledge of sustainability, construction technology and integrated project delivery; and civic engagement and active involvement in urban renewal/social innovations projects.

**Environmental Studies Major.** Wheelock C. in Boston has a new undergraduate environmental studies major. The interdisciplinary degree provides students with flexibility to

explore social, cultural, and scientific issues. In addition to core courses in the natural sciences, students also take courses in a variety of disciplines, such as math, health, food, energy, biodiversity, climate, history, culture or policy. Students will also do field work in aquariums, schools and colleges, consulting firms, nature conservatories, ski resorts, farms, newspapers and magazines, utility companies, nonprofit organizations, national parks, grassroots organizations or zoos.

"This new degree program fits perfectly with the college's mission of improving the lives of children and families through awareness and education of the environment in which we live," said Professor Ellen E. Faszewski, Chair of the Math/Science Department.

**Kansas Honors.** The Honors Program at the U. of Kansas has been expanded from 275 to 400 students, starting this fall, thanks to an additional \$200,000 devoted to its budget. "In the past, we've had to turn away so many incredibly good applicants," said program director Kathleen McCluskey-Fawcett. The new class of honor students includes 30 international students.

**Longwood's Environmental Sciences.** Longwood U. in Virginia has a new integrated environmental sciences degree. Students have the option of exploring environmental sciences and its relationship with economics, sociology, health and recreation, chemistry and physics. Capstone courses focus on environmental planning, management and decision-making. The major prepares students for jobs in public health, public resource management, green technology and other fields. ■

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

**Top Programs in Entrepreneurship.** Babson C. was just named the top undergraduate school for entrepreneurship, according to a 2013 survey of 2,000 schools by Princeton Review and *Entrepreneur Magazine*. The ranking is based on a school's commitment to entrepreneurship; the percentage of faculty, students and alumni involved in entrepreneurial endeavors; and scholarship and mentorship programs.

Other schools in the top 10 of the 25 colleges that made the final cut: U. of Houston, U. of Southern California, Syracuse U., Baylor U., the U. of Oklahoma, Stanford U., Washington U. in St. Louis, Brigham Young U. and Northeastern U. See, [www.princetonreview.com/sntrepreneur](http://www.princetonreview.com/sntrepreneur).

**SATs Stagnate.** This year, the average SAT reading score was 496, math was 514 and writing was 488. The scores have been stagnant since 2009. In 2013, 46 percent of test-takers were minority students, up from 40 percent for the class of 2009.

To help high schools push performance higher, the College Board developed a "SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark." The SAT Benchmark score of 1550 is associated with a 65 percent probability of obtaining a first-year college GPA of B- or higher. Unfortunately, only 43 percent of SAT test-takers in the high school class of 2013 graduated academically prepared for college. ■

## Other News on Enrollment

### California's C.C.'s Enrollment Reversals.

After years of declining enrollment, the number of students at California's 112 community colleges has increased by at least 2.5 percent, while the number of credit hours has increased by 5 percent. Last year, enrollment declined by 4.8 percent after funding was cut by \$1.5 billion between 2007-08 and 2011-12. That led to a 24 percent decline in course sections and enrollment fell from about 2.9 million to 2.3 million students.

"Thanks to the passage of Proposition 30 last year, our community colleges now have the fiscal confidence to increase course offerings," said Chancellor Brice W. Harris.

The fall 2013 enrollment survey also found that California community colleges had an average of 5,026 students on their waitlists.

### Graduate School Increase.

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) reported a 1.8 percent increase in first-time enrollment between fall 2011 and fall 2012. More than 461,000 students enrolled in graduate certificate, education specialist, master's or doctoral programs in fall 2012. The overall acceptance rate was slightly lower than the previous year, with 39.5 percent of applications resulting in offers.

First-time enrollment for underrepresented minorities increased. Hispanic graduate enrollment rose by 7.4 percent, for Native Americans the rate jumped by 5.7 percent, while 4.6 percent more African-Americans enrolled in graduate school in the fall of 2012 than in 2011.

In fall 2012, 54.7 percent of all temporary resident graduate students were enrolled in engineering, mathematics and computer science, physical and earth sciences or biological and agricultural sciences. Only 17.3 percent of U.S. citizens were enrolled in these fields.

The largest fields by total enrollment were education, which accounted for 20 percent of all graduate students, and business, which accounted for 16 percent. About 58 percent of all first-time graduate students in fall 2012 were women.

### LAST WORD: Well-Rounded Graduates.

"Being well-rounded with a range of abilities is more important than having industry expertise, because job-specific skills can be learned at work." That is what two-thirds of adults and that three-quarters of employers said they valued in a new public-opinion survey released by Northeastern University. ■

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